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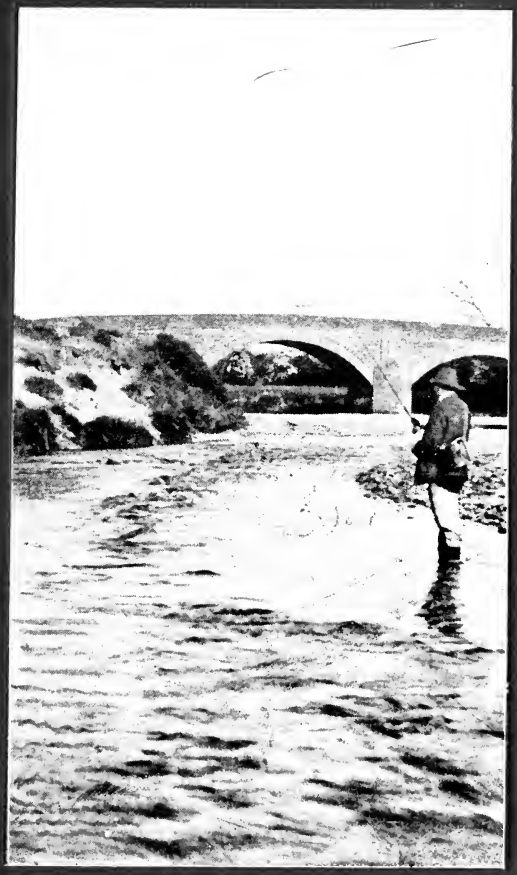
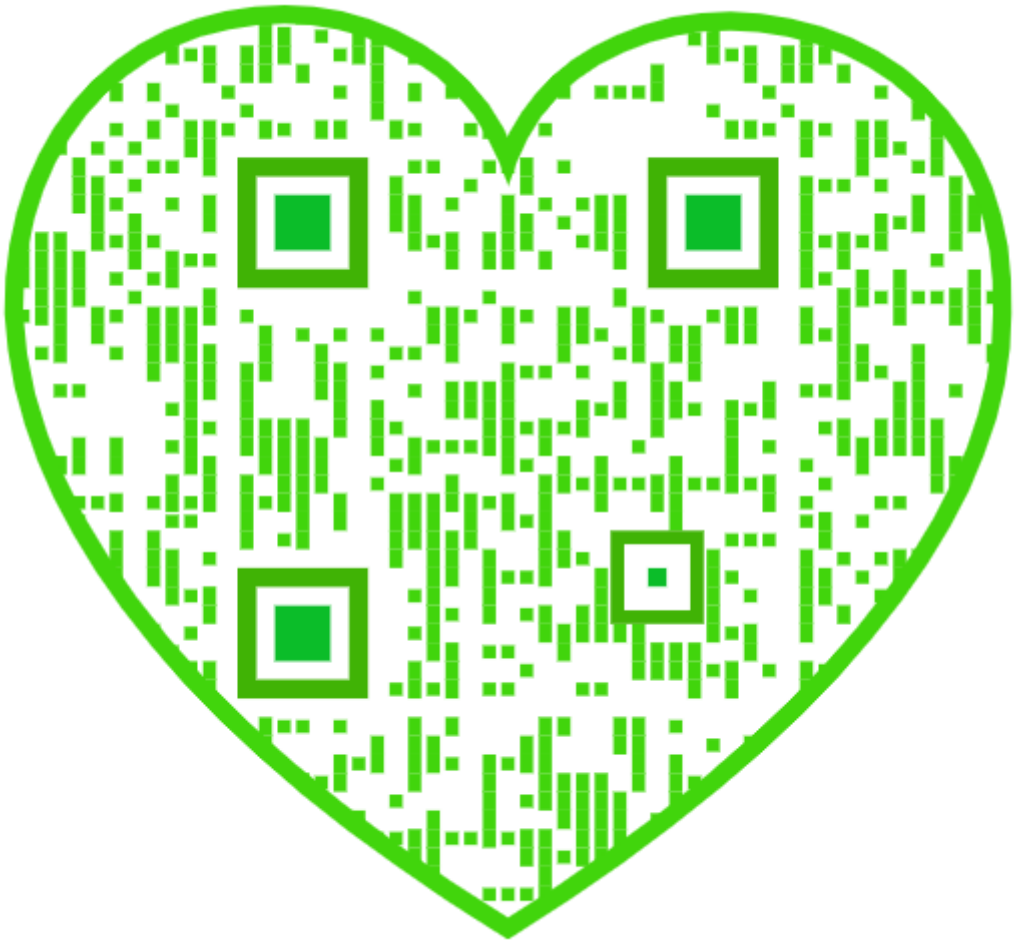
ALL ABOUT TROUT FISHING

(2/6)

J. A. RIDDELL
("BORDER ROD").





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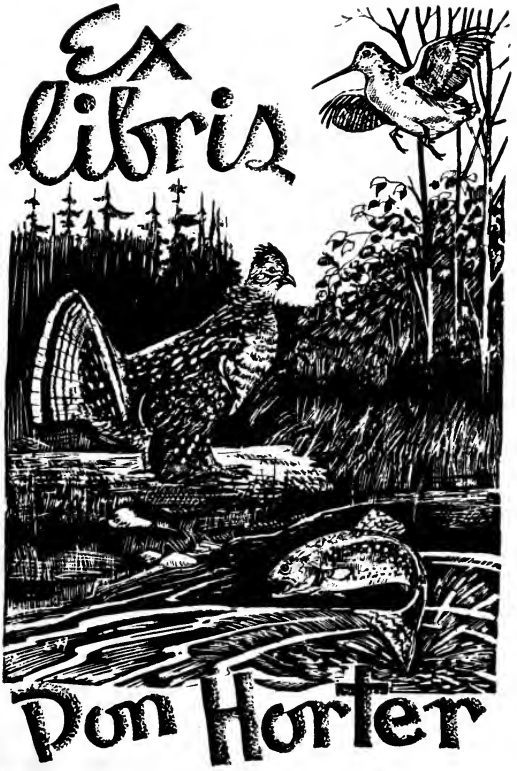
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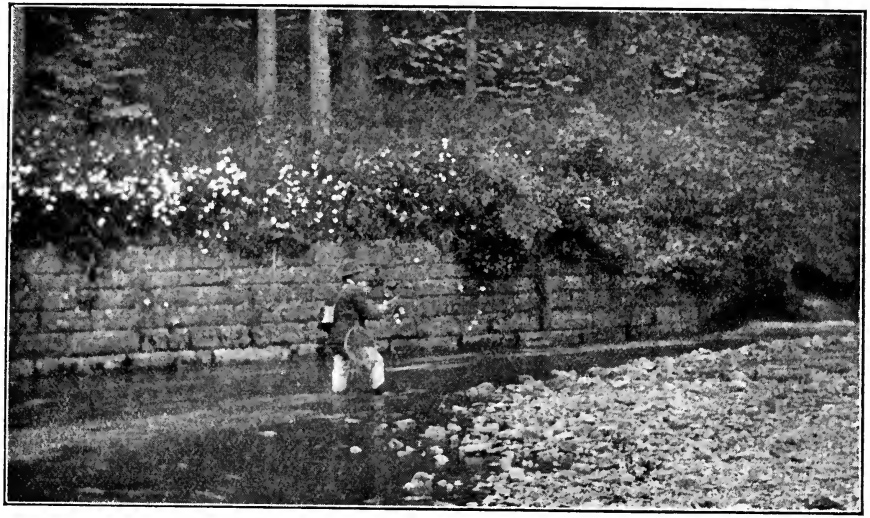

CLEAR WATER WORMING.

(See page 53.)

ALL ABOUT

TROUT FISHING.

BY

J. A. RIDDELL
("BORDER ROD").

"We may say of angling, as Dr. Boteley said of strawberries, 'Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did;' and so, if I might judge, God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling."—IZAAK WALTON.

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1909.

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PREFACE.

As an angler who has spent the most of five-and-twenty seasons by the riverside, my aim is to convey to the reader, in simple language, the outcome of actual experience, in the hope that beginners, and also more experienced anglers, may find some information that will enlighten them to attain better results.

My aim is to touch upon every legitimate lure, and to give, in the smallest limits, practical information with advice that will enable the novice to proceed without further instruction, and meet with a share of success in angling.

To those commencing, I can recommend angling as one of the most whole-

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some of pastimes—one that will keep those who pursue it in good health and afford them an abiding pleasure that will be as fresh at sixty as sixteen.

It only remains to state that what has been said in these pages as to northern waters applies equally to all streams where trout abound, whether in the south, east, or west of our country.

RYTON-ON-TYNE.

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ALL ABOUT TROUT FISHING.

CHAPTER I.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ANGLING.

One of the secrets of success in angling lies in keeping out of sight, and to do this it is advisable to make oneself as inconspicuous as possible. Thus my favourite colour in dress is a drab shade, which accords with rocks, gravel beds, and grey backing of clouds. The invisible brown, however, has one disadvantage; if you have with you a friend who is higher up the stream, he often has a difficulty in locating you on a gravel bed.

A Safe Rule.

It is always advisable in low and clear waters, when possible, to fish up stream, and in the early months, while fly-fishing, you need have very little fear of being bothered with parr, those pests of down-stream fishers. In fact, when I see a brother-angler fishing down stream I always think it is a good thing for the trout. Copy Nature, and produce flies a shade smaller in preference to larger than the natural insect.

Do not be afraid to sink your flies, and give preference to spider dressing, also look carefully to the fineness of the gut. Bushy, heavily-dressed flies are objectionable, as trout are, like human beings, more easily attracted by the elegant and slim. Keep in mind, trout are the keenest-eyed of fishes—a mere shadow, or an unnatural ripple in wading, being sufficient

to scare them away. A golden rule is to keep out of sight.

Value of a Pocket Lens.

A pocket lens is very useful to examine the contents of the stomach of the first fish you land. Even though it may be partly digested, with a powerful lens you frequently can detect what the fish are feeding on. I repeat, always try to copy Nature to the minutest detail. When fly-fishing in a good breeze, cast your flies on the side the food is drifting towards. It is advisable to keep your finger on the line, as a gentle pull is more easily felt; you can then strike instantaneously. When using a landing-net do not try to take a fish in less than a foot of water; trout struggle dangerously when stranded in shallow water; also keep the net well below a fish in netting him. Patience,

with perseverance and keen observation, greatly help a beginner.

Caution Essential.

In commencing to fish the shallow side of a stream in clear water, wade in very carefully. If a wave goes before you, the fish will at once clear away. In evening and night fishing you cannot be too careful; trout then leave the streams and deeper water for the side and thin, flat water. Good trout in rivers, sorely disturbed through the day, seek shelter in the daytime, and usually come out of their harbour towards dusk.

In playing a good trout, when you have the luck to hook one, instantly raise the point of your rod and keep it up and ever up; only lower the top should the fish jump out of the water, and as soon as he regains his own element, up with the rod top again. Never let out more

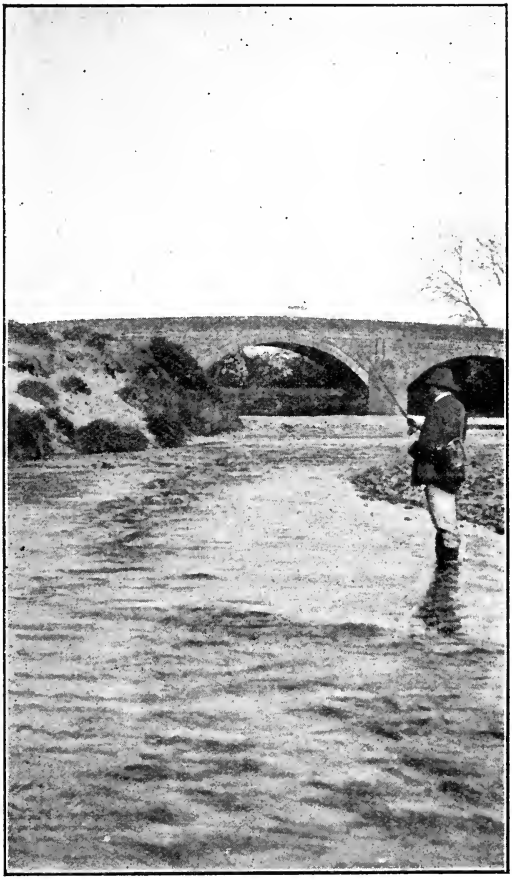
line than you can possibly help, and to this end follow your fish up or down stream, keeping slightly below him. If you simply stand still and let him run you are almost sure to lose him.

Study the Habits of Trout.

A good knowledge of the habits of trout materially help the angler, and in small waters, when fishing is practically at a standstill, an hour or so is well spent in watching the movements and habits of the fish. This can be done by creeping cautiously, taking all the shelter of any cover that the riverside affords. It will also give the angler an idea of how near he may approach a fish without being observed. He can also take note of what particular kind of water fish are feeding in—whether it be the shallows, the streams, the medium, or deeper water.

Perfection Unattainable.

Much has been uttered from time to time as to the patience required to make a good angler. How often you hear it said, with perhaps a tinge of contempt, "Oh, I have not the patience to become a fisherman!" Well, I candidly admit I have not, and never had, the patience to go on persistently flogging the water when fish are off the feed. I simply give up, and generally fill in the spare time either in collecting minnows or turning up the stones by the waterside and examining the different larvæ hatching out, or perhaps have a smoke until the rise comes on again. But to my mind the charm of fly-fishing is that, though perfection is unattainable, yet progress, and with it a fair amount of success, is within the reach of all.



WET FLY-FISHING.

See page 15.)

CHAPTER II.

ARTIFICIAL FLY-FISHING.

WET, or sunk, fly-fishing up stream is universally indulged in throughout the North; and I strongly urge this method whenever practicable. You are more certain of hooking fish; a much shorter line may be used, and you are proceeding in the direct way to keep out of sight.

CHOICE OF A ROD.

A rod of 9 ft. 6 in. to 11 feet is about the handiest length, and, personally, I do not like them too supple; the lighter, with a moderate stiffness, the better. Limber rods for up-stream fishing are not good. There is so much difference of opinion as to what is the best material for rod-making

that I refrain from any definite recommendation apart from cautioning my readers against the purchase of cheap rods. On one point, however, there can be no two opinions, that is, in selecting a rod take extreme care to guard against getting one in the slightest degree too heavy, as this effectually prevents the skilful manipulation of the rod that is necessary in up-stream casting. Casting is done chiefly from the wrist; and if the rod is too heavily balanced it is bound to lead to slovenly and unsatisfactory fishing. Lightness with free action are desirable.

The Reel.

It is also necessary to see that your reel corresponds in weight to balance the rod properly. The ratchet should not be at all stiff, otherwise you are certain of being broken by the first run of a fish. Have the drum well filled up with backing,

so that the line will pay out faster, but leave sufficient room in case of reeling up in the dark, otherwise the line is apt to get jammed.

The Line.

Select a waterproofed line that in thickness and weight compares favourably with the build of the rod. Much depends upon this in casting. A tapered line is also an advantage. Otherwise use a tippet or casting-line of taper-twisted gut about five or six feet long. For a beginner a casting-line is a good help in learning to cast. It is difficult to give instructions in writing for the novice to accomplish this seemingly simple task. However, the following hints will be found useful:—

How to Cast.

Commence with a moderate length of line—one of not more than sixteen or

seventeen feet; just prior to making the backward cast raise the rod top sufficiently to gather the slack line; then considerable force is used in the backward cast to get the line fully extended behind the angler. This latter motion must have an upward swing, so as to prevent your tackle becoming foul of any objects behind you.

The forward cast should be made immediately the line is fully extended; this requires only a slight movement of the wrist, and the rod itself will carry out the flies. Of course, there are occasions when a certain amount of force is required to extend the line, that is when you have a wind against you, or in using a long line.

Use the Wrist.

I have noticed that generally beginners more or less want to do the work themselves, working both body and arm; in

fact, one friend in particular, should he read this, will at once know who I am referring to, inasmuch as it took days to get him out of the way of that dreadful heave of the arm; eventually, to accomplish this I had to strap his arm by the side of his waist. In this way he was enabled to overcome the difficulty. Always bear in mind that every cast should as much as possible be made from the wrist, keeping the arm down to the elbow close by the side, and thus save labour, and at the same time giving a graceful and accurate throw.

Flies must not Drag.

In up-stream fishing you are constantly casting three times for a down fisher's once. Let your line float about three yards, then up and at them again. Do not drag your flies, but keep your line fairly taut. The natural flies are

carried down more or less rapidly, according to the velocity of the stream. Do not trail your flies, as this gives rise to suspicion. In casting do not bring your rod top within two yards of the surface of the water. This also is bad form, and apt to alarm the keen-sighted trout.

Arrest from the wrist in mid descent, and the line will then spin out straight and fall flies first.

Do not be afraid to sink your flies. The majority of aquatic insects are hatched under stones in the bed of the river; and for one that meets death on the surface, I am bold to say scores are seized in the middle passage. This is easily proved. No fly is on, but you are getting an occasional trout. Open the mouth of the trout, squeeze the body, and you will be much astonished at the mass of insect food disgorged. As already stated, a small pocket lens proves very useful to ascertain what the trout are feeding on.

When to Strike.

In striking in up-stream fishing, "the rise of a fish" is not always seen, for the simple reason that your fly is probably four or five inches below the surface. Keep your eyes on the water, about where you think your flies are, and if you see the gleam of a trout strike; or if you see your line stop, instantly tighten: you cannot do this too soon. Correct striking is an art that is acquired by dint of much practice and careful observation; but in up-stream fishing as opposed to down, it is comparatively seldom that you are broken, as you pull the fish towards you with the current. Good trout take the fly gently, sucking it in, and do not usually cause the ripple that smaller ones do.

When Trout rise Short.

In fly-fishing every rise or slight pull should be responded to by instantly

tightening the line. It is remarkable on some days what a small percentage of fish you hook in comparison with rises. However, this is unavoidable by even the most experienced angler. Light and clouds may have something to do with this, particularly in the early part of the season. Also, trout are not in good condition; and in the earlier months they are generally more in the deeper water, and when rising to the fly, the deceptive light, together with their backward condition, they come rather short.

The Best Month for Fishing.

Trout fishing in most of the North of England rivers opens at different dates in March, but little good with fly-fishing can be accomplished until April. This latter month and May, given mild weather, are the two best months in the season for fly-fishing. The best parts of the river to

fish in April are the gentle running streams, as trout, being out of condition, are unable to live in the stronger water. Therefore, the angler must devote his attention to the pools and slow-running water. A favourite cast is under overgrowing willows, trees, or any other such shelter by the side of the river. During the early part of the season trout, as a general rule, take better in the sheltered stretches of the river, which also meets with the approval of the angler. In cold or boisterous weather little good can be expected, and under these conditions the angler, if bent on fishing, should certainly make for the sheltered stretches.

The Spring Spates.

During March and April spates are frequent, accompanied with fairly strong winds, and generally, to the angler's regret, they blow down stream. However,

on these occasions the water is somewhat coloured, so the fisher has the advantage of being able to cast partly with the wind, casting across and down stream without much fear of being observed by the fish. In this way the run of the water keeps the line tight, consequently the angler must refrain from striking a rising fish. The mere tightness of the line is sufficient to send the hook home; otherwise, if he should strike he is almost certain to pull the fly out of the fish's mouth, as, in addition to the weight of the fish, he also has the pull of the water to contend with. The hooks being so small, and the angler pulling direct out of the fish's mouth, this is almost sure to occur. When striking a fish in up-stream fishing, it is done by a motion of the wrist, and must be instantaneous but gentle—heavy striking is dangerous, and a habit that is easily acquired; therefore, try to avoid violent striking. Much presence of mind

is needed to keep nerves under control and so avoid the startled jerk, which so frequently results in the loss of a decent trout.

When once you have securely got the hook home, the greater care you exercise in playing the fish the more certainty you have in ultimately creeling it.

June Fly-Fishing.

With the advent of June fly-fishing becomes uncertain on our principal rivers. In fact, as soon as the stone-fly appears on the water fly-fishing becomes at a discount. Yet occasionally a decent basket of fish may be secured by using the finest of artificial flies; but for reliable fishing the angler must wend his way to the hilly country side or outlying districts and make for the smaller tributaries, where good baskets may frequently be made by using similar flies used in the main rivers a

month or six weeks earlier. When I say good baskets I refer to quantity not quality; but, nevertheless, the angler will sometimes meet with odd half or three-quarter pounders. Vegetation is generally backward in the moorland and hilly districts, likewise the insect life. I have seen a good hatch of March browns appear on the water at the end of April and beginning of May on Rede-water, whereas on the main rivers it had been off fully a month.

June is quite early enough to commence operations in the moorland tributaries, and owing to the scarcity of fly-life, trout are naturally backward in condition. They do not rise with freedom until there is a regular supply of the natural fly on the water, and this seldom occurs until June is fairly established.

The Charm of the Burns.

Two flies are ample for burn fishing, and probably one may be used to greater

advantage. All the angler has to do is to keep out of sight and get his fly on the water, and he is almost certain of a rise from every pool. He will also be much surprised at the resistance offered by these little fellows averaging five or six to the pound. Burn fishing has its own charms, and leads many anglers to some of our wildest and most beautiful scenery.

In burns rising and flowing through peat, a grey partridge-spider, with yellow body, works well. If using two flies, they should not be more than two feet apart.

Some Reliable Flies.

The following list of flies are good killers, and I have found them to work well throughout the season. They are by no means complete; but, from experience, I think there are few days during the season that one or other of them will fail to lure trout. In making up a cast vary the

shades, selecting a dark fly, a brown or red fly, and a light coloured fly, and you will thus ascertain the right colour.

Flies are the most important lures in the angler's equipment. In our rivers we have two types of flies, the winged fly and spider or hackle. The former is decidedly the closer imitation of the natural insect, but the latter is out and out the most deadly.

The following varieties are amongst the first flies to make their appearance at the opening of the trouting season, of course providing the weather is favourable to the hatching of insect life. The little Winter Brown, dressed from the dark feathers of woodcock, with dark brown and light brown bodies, and the Light Woodcock with orange body, are amongst the first arrivals.

Waterhen, with yellow body and least speck of gold tinsel on tail of body; male and female March Browns; Greenwell's

Glory, dressed from the hen blackbird; dark snipe and purple body, light snipe and yellow body, and grey partridge breast and yellow body generally answer well for the opening stages of the season.

I strongly recommend these flies dressed in spider fashion and worked with small patterns when the waters are clear and at their normal volume; but after a flood, or with plenty of fresh water running, a larger sized fly is preferable. In all cases the size of fly should be regulated according to the size and state of the river. After floods, when the water has assumed a black colour, trout usually rise freely to the fly, and under these conditions are easily approached.

Other flies that appear later are Starling with yellow body; and Grouse with brown, dark red, or orange body sometimes kills well in spring and autumn. Blue dun and iron blue dun work well in April and May, and are great favourites in cold weather.

Red Palmer is a good fly throughout the season.

(*a*) Woodcock wing, with hare lug and least speck of jungle cork on each side of wing; (*b*) yellow or deep orange and red hackle; (*c*) quill body and red or black hackle; (*d*) black body and black hackle. In one of these forms of dressing the Woodcock winged fly kills well in the latter part of April and into the middle of May on warm days.

Murton's Favourite. This pattern is a famous killing fly, and works well on the Coquet, North Tyne, Redewater, and Cumberland rivers from the middle of April until the end of May. I have also taken trout with this fly during the autumn fishing.

Bracken clock is a deadly lure from the middle of April in "running off" waters, and a great favourite with many of our best fly-fishers.

Red spinner is an excellent fly during

May, in dull weather with a gentle rain, when the natural flies are driven on the water, and on such rivers as the Eden, Irthing, North Tyne, Till, Black and Whit Adder. Good results are made with this imitation.

The Yellow Sally.

Yellow Sally is a capital fly at the end of May and through June, and happy is the angler who has a correct imitation of this specie, for trout rise with avidity to it, and will look at nothing else while it is on. This fly is often imitated with dyed feathers, which are worthless, as after a few casts the dye washes off the feather and renders it useless.

Black spider is an out-and-out killer on all rivers, and no angler should be without it. It works well during late spring and summer, and fishes splendidly on thin, flat water with a ruffled surface. I have taken a score of fish on a good swim in

a couple of hours with this specimen. Cummins, of Bishop Auckland, stocks all standard North-country, etc., patterns.

Dotterel hackle, with yellow or orange body, is a general favourite on all North-country streams; it is a splendid imitation of the pale yellow dun, and has accounted for some good baskets of fish.

The Golden Plover Spider, with quill or yellow body, appears on the water towards the end of May, and kills well in clear water.

Turkey brown comes on the water early in May; it has a good character, and is used generally by fly-fishers.

The Olive Dun fly appears in May in various shades, and it is as well to have the different dressings, being a most reliable fly that kills well in May.

The Autumn Black fly usually comes on about the end of August, and kills well until the end of the season. Teal and silver body dressed on a No. o hook works well in the latter part of August and September.

Some Made-up Casts.

The following made-up casts are good for the first month's fishing:—

No. 1.—Winter brown, point fly; waterhen, 1st dropper; dark snipe and yellow, 2nd dropper.

No. 2.—March brown spider, Greenwell's glory, Light Woodcock.

No. 3.—Red palmer or spring black, Blue dun, Dark Snipe and Purple.

No. 4.—Waterhen, Grey Partridge and yellow, Dark Woodcock.

These casts can always be varied by substituting another of the early flies on the point, which is by far the easiest changed. The dropper flies should be placed about two and a half feet apart, and the length of gut should not exceed two inches from the main cast, otherwise, if longer, the gut gets twisted round the main cast. The best method to attach the dropper flies is to make a small loop

not larger than a quarter of an inch about two inches from the fly, double the main cast above a knot where you desire to attach the dropper and insert through the small loop, then put the fly through the main cast and draw the dropper tight, at the same time again straightening the main cast and working the dropper down to the knot. In this way the dropper is attached with double gut, and thus stands out at right angles from the main cast. In another chapter ("A Few Hints on Tackle") will be found an illustration (page 88).

How to Fish a Large River.

I am no advocate of down-stream fly-fishing, unless in a large river which cannot be fully commanded by wading. In this case there is a sufficient volume of water to conceal the angler; and under these circumstances it is advisable to fish down

and across stream, using a fairly long line and working slowly down a good swim. If trout are found rising at a particular spot, it is as well to remain as long as the rise lasts. In wading much care should be exercised to prevent ripples, as they travel much easier down the water than up; so refra moving as much as possible, an ng so travel very slowly.

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Seasons of the Year.

In April fly-fishing is rather uncertain in the early part of this month, and the rise is usually of short duration; from eleven to one o'clock is the best time of the day, and trout are to be found in the deeper and quieter running water in the early part of the month. Towards the end of April another rise comes on during the afternoon. The best flies are March Brown, Greenwell's Glory, Woodcock, Waterhen, Light Snipe, Dark Snipe and Purple.

May.

The best month for fly-fishing is May, when trout become in prime condition and spread themselves over the stronger streams and shallower running currents. Fly is generally in abundance, and altogether sport is more reliable throughout the day. During this month the rivers are

gradually drawing towards summer level, and up-stream fishing is most essential.

The best flies are the Blue Dun, Iron Blue Dun, Partridge Spider, Waterhen and yellow body. Light Snipe and Woodcock Wing are useful for the early part of the month, with lighter coloured duns towards the end of the month. Murton's Favourite, Red Spinner, Alder Fly, Bracken Clock, and Black Midge are also in favour.

JUNE.

With the advancement of this month fly-fishing gradually goes off on all main rivers; but it sometimes happens that a basket of fish may be taken with such flies as Yellow Sally, Black Spider, or small yellow May Dun. Usually during this month the fisherman's curse, a small black midge, appears on the water; and in the streams trout may be observed jumping a little above the surface trying to drown this

fisherman's curse, which hover near the surface in myriads. From the middle of the month onwards, should the angler desire to use the fly, it will be found more profitable to use the finest selection of small Dun Spiders.

July.

In the daytime trout mostly feed on worms and minnows, but towards night, and during the night, they rise freely to the fly. Small sets of flies should be used during the early part of the night, but when the light diminishes a larger set should be used. See another chapter on Night Fishing (page 78).

August.

Fly-fishing during this month is also uncertain except at night-time.

September.

Good sport is frequently had with the fly during this month, especially in a black

or running off water after a flood. The fish are still to be found in the streams, but towards the end of the month they fall back to the pools and slower running water. The flies used in the early part of the season work well. I have also found a small Teal Wing and silver body successful, together with an Autumn Dun.

In the latter part of the month I have seen much activity in fly life and the fish feeding fairly well, but it is advisable to use the finest tackle in clear water, as trout have had cause to become aware that they have many enemies.

CHAPTER III.

DRY FLY-FISHING.

Dry fly-fishing has hitherto been very little practised in north-country rivers, but is rapidly becoming more general; perhaps it is owing to the presence of so many south-country anglers patronizing our northern rivers. The best course for the novice to adopt is to watch an expert, if possible, for a few days. In dry fly-fishing the rod should be about eleven feet long and possessed of plenty of driving power, with a tapered reel-line and the gut cast tapered also. The flies should be dressed on eyed hooks for many reasons, and to see the collection of a dry fly-fisher proper is interesting in the extreme, not only for the many different specimens but for the correct imitations

of the natural flies themselves in the minutest details.

Entomological Knowledge Desirable.

The use of these flies demands that the angler should have some considerable knowledge of entomology, and at a glance be able to recognize the actual fly that a rising fish is feeding on. This is by no means easily ascertained by the unskilled, and generally ends with the angler having to secure the natural fly, and even then much time is taken up in comparing the natural with the artificial to select the correct pattern.

When you have done this tie the fly on the end of the cast, then dip it overhead in a small bottle of prepared paraffin (Cummins, of Bishop Auckland, sells a good brass bottle, unbreakable, and a great improvement upon the old glass pattern), then cast on to the water to wash the oil off again, then whisk the fly back-

wards and forwards in the air half-a-dozen times to dry it thoroughly. Approach a rising fish from below to within nice casting distance, aim at an imaginary point in the air about four feet above where the fish is rising, so as to ascertain the length of line required. Cast slightly above the fish, allowing the fly to float naturally over him; if there is no response, allow the fly to float a couple of yards below him before lifting off the water, so as not to disturb him; then dry the fly by whisking in the air before casting over him again. Much skill is required in this method of casting, and great care must be taken so that the line does not drag the fly when cast over the fish.

How the Fly must Alight.

It is obvious that the fly must alight on the water with its wings cocked up; but should it fall sideways, let it drift well below the fish before lifting it to dry

again. These floating flies, the majority of which are double winged, generally alight on the water as desired. The greatest difficulty is in preventing the line dragging the fly, as, if it does so, the result is disastrous. Sometimes a dropper fly is also used, but I strongly advocate the use of one fly only. When you have either secured the fish or put him down, you proceed up the river to look for another rising fish, when a repetition of this process is gone through again.

Dry fly-fishing works to advantage in pools and slow-running water, with or without a ripple; but in the former case the angler must be extremely cautious in approaching the fish, and always fish up stream.

The reel line should be well rubbed with deer fat, and it will thus float better on the surface of the water.

In casting over a fish, it is well to have the reel line rather slack when the fly

alights, thus preventing the line dragging the fly. Should the fish rise and take the fly, strike immediately.

Familiar Floating Flies.

The number of floating flies are too great for me to mention here, but I name a few favourites, dressed with two pair of wings:—1. Greenwell's Glory; 2. March Brown; 3. Iron Blue, light and dark; 4. Woodcock, hare lug and quill body; 5. Blue Dun; 6. Olive Dun, male and female; 7. Black Spider, quill or dark brown body; 8. Alder; 9. Dark Sedge; 10. Dotterell; 11. Red Quill Gnat; 12. Red Spinner; 13. Needle Brown; 14. Little Marryat; 15. Black Gnat; 16. Apple Green Dun; 17. Artful Dodger; 18. Autumn Dun.

CHAPTER IV.

CREEPER FISHING.

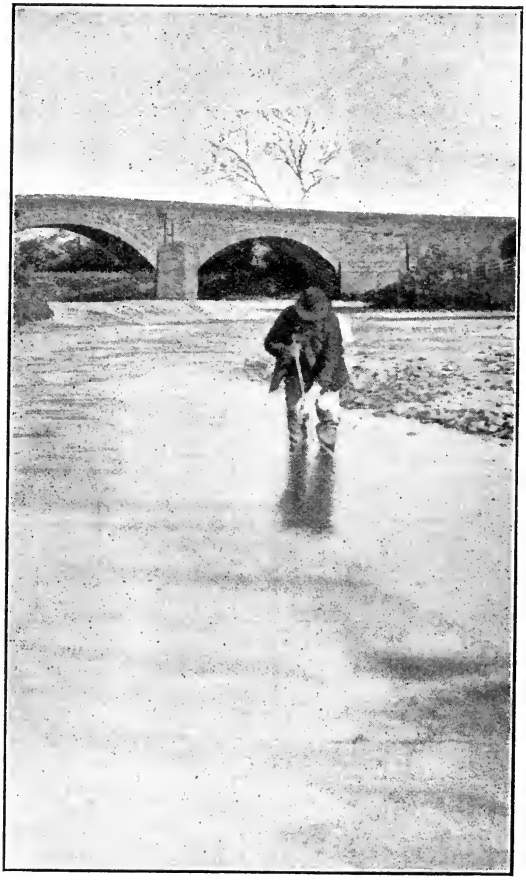
THE Creeper is the larvæ of the Stone Fly, usually termed the "May Fly" in the north, because it generally makes its appearance towards the end of May. In the larvæ stage it is one of the most deadly lures. Creeper-fishing works well as soon as trout commence to improve in condition, and are capable of feeding in the streams. It may be commenced about the beginning of April. Many anglers make the mistake of fishing creeper when the best of the season is over, inasmuch as they are hatched in the bed of the river, and it is while they are leaving the deeper water in the streams for the sides to hatch out in the fly that the trout come naturally

on the feed of them, as in doing this they get washed away in the strong water and are eagerly sought for by the fish.

How to obtain the Creeper.

To obtain a supply of creepers, the best method is to hold your landing-net (which should have a good-sized mouth with a small mesh) in front of you in such a position that in turning the stones and gravel over with your brogues in the stream, the current will wash them into your net. One of Murton's japanned-tin creeper-boxes, with a little damp moss inside, is handy for carrying them, and kept moist by dipping over-head in the water frequently through the day while fishing and kept in a cool place at night, they can thus be kept for three or four days.

Creepers may also be gathered on the leeward side of the stream by turning the



COLLECTING CREEPERS WITH LANDING-NET.

(See page 46.)

stones over in the shallow water with your hand; but this is a slow way to collect them in comparison with a net. The best baits to use are the largest and clearest coloured and those with a mottled olive body above and yellow below, being fully an inch in length.

To Bait the Creeper Hook.

There are different ways of baiting them. Personally, I prefer two hooks (sizes two and one) tied about five-eighths of an inch apart—two at the point and one above. To bait them, hold the creeper in your left hand between the thumb and forefinger, and with your right insert the larger point of the hook through the body, close to the tail, the point protruding upwards. Impale the smaller one through the neck or head and you can then cast without fear of flicking them off.

The creeper must be fished up stream practically like clear-water "worming,"

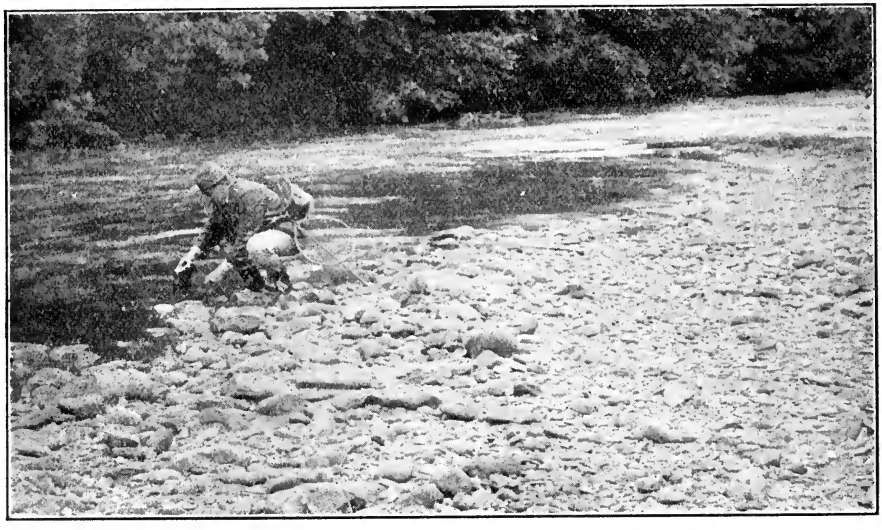
exercising care in wading not to send any ripples up the water to herald your approach.

It is advisable to have a small shot about six inches up the gut when fishing in strong water, thus keeping the bait better down in the strong streams.

Every stream ought to be most carefully fished, especially the edges of gravel-beds and all broken water. It is of no use fishing in dead or deep water. It is not an uncommon occurrence to kill three or four trout in as many yards providing you pull your fish down stream immediately he is hooked, so preventing him giving warning to the fish above.

The Rod for Creeper Fishing.

The rod should not be less than eleven feet for creeper-fishing, and a rod of even longer dimensions would all be in favour of the angler provided it be not too heavy and easily worked with a single hand. It



GATHERING CREEPER.

(See pages 46 and 47.)

is required to be fairly stiff, as in many cases one has to lift the fish in the strong water out of the way of snags, weirings, etc., which the large fish always make for.

When to Use the Creeper.

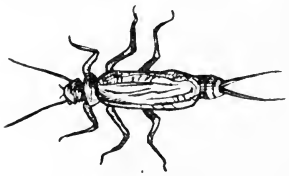
In the early part of the season the creeper fishes best in the early morning. In fact, trout will take creeper as soon as there is sufficient daylight, providing there is no mist about. The same tackle as I have mentioned is also suitable to fish the stone-fly. For illustration, see Chapter on Tackle (page 91).

The Stone-Fly.

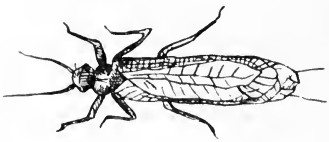
The most favourable waters to fish the stone-fly is exactly opposite to the creeper. With the former a porter-coloured water or a rise or fall after a spate, is the most propitious time for its use, together with dull, calm weather, or only a slight breeze. Should the angler have these conditions

at the end of May or during the first fortnight in June, sport is almost assured.

The best way to preserve the stone-fly is to cut a piece of bark from the mountain ash tree, or willow tree, about twelve inches long and three inches broad, double it in the middle, and bind round with string, making it into a bottle, with the mouth about one inch in diameter. For a stopper use a piece of mountain ash branch. The sap in the bark keeps the inside of the bottle moist, and thus the fly keeps better.



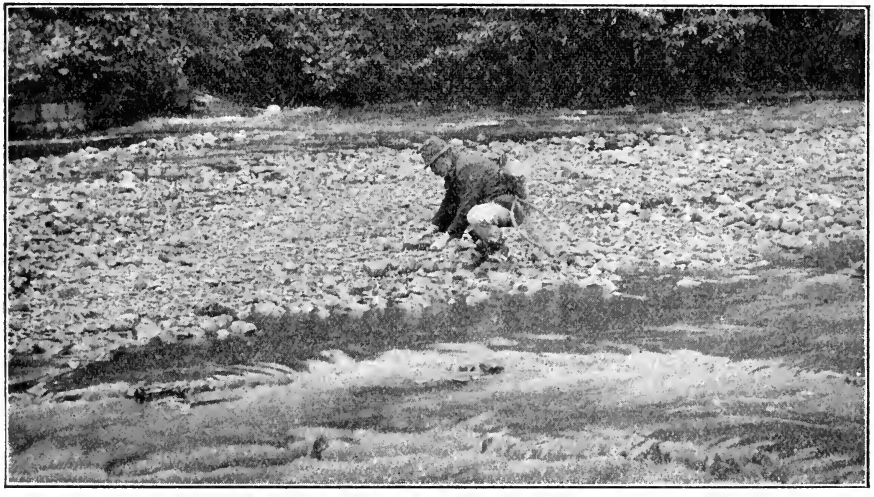
Male Stone-Fly.



Female Stone-Fly.

Creeper Larvæ of Stone-Fly.

The stone-flies are collected on the under



GATHERING STONE-FLY.

(See pages 50 and 51.)

side of large stones, where there is most moisture on the gravel beds, and the male fly is the most deadly bait. The female fly is about twice the size of the male, and the former is easily caught in comparison with the latter. The male fly indeed is difficult to catch, being much sharper than the female.

The method in fishing the stone-fly is similar to that used in fishing the creeper, but greater care must be taken in casting, as the fly is very tender.

Shade-Fishing.

The stone-fly is also used for shade-fishing during hot weather. For example, the angler approaches the haunts of feeding fish in the pools under willows or bushes overhanging the river. The line is wound round the rod top with the fly baited, and pushed underneath the bushes, then uncoiled, allowing the fly to move about on the surface of the water.

This system requires much patience, but frequently large trout are captured in this way, especially during the daytime, with a bright sunshine from a cloudless sky, in low and clear waters, when other modes of angling are at a discount. Under these conditions trout move about, and the angler who has patience for such proceedings often meets with his reward.

Caddis Bait.

The caddis bait, which is also found in the bed of the river, may be baited and fished in exactly the same way as the creeper. This lure also works well by the side of pools, casting a fairly long line upstream. A combination of the caddis used in the slower running water and the creeper in the stronger streams usually works well. These baits are rather repulsive to look at and handle, so those fastidious anglers who object to bait-fishing generally had better skip these few pages.

CHAPTER V.

WORM FISHING.

UP-STREAM worm fishing in low, clear waters proves very deadly during the summer months, especially in hot weather, and, providing there is no mist on the water, trout will take the worm freely from daybreak at early morning until evening during intervals. Towards the middle of June trout will be found in the strong and shallow streams at different periods through the day. As the days of June creep on insects abound on the river in myriads, and trout seemingly lose all taste for them, as they hover round the surface of the water little heeded by the fish, whereas if a worm is presented it is immediately seized. This mode of fishing is becoming more popular,

and when used scientifically, is a certain means of success.

The Rod for Worm Fishing.

The rod should not be less than fourteen feet, and one of even longer dimensions is all in favour of the angler. It must be light yet stiff. A hollow cane butt and middle, with a lance-wood top, answers well, and besides being easy to cast with, a rod of this type commands, with a medium length of line, almost every variety of water. It frequently happens that one has heavy fish to hold in the strong water from snags, weirings, etc., so a fairly stiff rod is required; also the rod must not be too highly polished, otherwise the glitter in bright sunshine will seriously interfere with sport. A preparation that dulls the rod completely, and when applied dries in a few minutes, can be purchased from tackle dealers. It is obvious that too highly stained rods must be guarded against, as at

midsummer, when the rivers are dead low and trout then lie in the shallow water, the merest shadow proves fatal. Cummins (Bishop Auckland) sells a special Worming Rod. The 14 ft. length weighs only 16¼ ozs.

Tackle.

There are different modes of baiting—the Stewart tackle with three hooks, the Pennell with two and a single hook. I much prefer the latter, using a fine wire hook. In June worms are difficult to obtain, and with a single hook sometimes one worm may do service for a couple of trout. In fact, with the former tackles almost every fish touched breaks the worm and renders it useless. Thus you need a large supply of worms for a day's fishing.

I strongly advocate the use of small worms. Worms should be kept fully a fortnight and well scoured, and the bright pink worms are the most deadly.

To bait with the single hook take the worm, dipped in sand, in your left hand, impale the hook in the mouth running the hook up the worm, leaving about half an inch to wriggle. Single hook, see Chapter on Tackle (page 91).

Casting.

In casting, the line is thrown back with an easy swing and brought forward with as little force as circumstances will allow, the rod top making more of a circle than in fly-fishing. Of course, if a long line is being used, or the wind blowing against you, it is necessary to bring the rod top almost on the surface of the water, thus to extend the line fully and allow the worm to fall lightly on the water. If casting over a strong current to the thin water beyond, should the line be at all immersed it will pull the worm quickly away, whereas if only the gut alights the intervening strong water has no power

over it. Thus this cast is best accomplished by checking the forward movement of the rod and keeping the top well up.

Wading Up-stream.

One cannot fish clear-water worm properly without wading, and at midsummer there is no period of the angling season when it is of such vital importance to proceed without alarming the trout, inasmuch as during June and July the rivers have shrunk to their lowest level, and the trout are to be found lying in the shallowest water. In fact, frequently I have taken fish in such shallow water that a portion of his back has been exposed to the air and sun, causing a whiteness on the skin. Under these circumstances the angler is easily perceived, and should at all times take every precaution in approaching the fish.

You must therefore fish up-stream, exercising care in wading not to send any

ripples in front of you, warning the fish of your approach. The thin streams and shallow running water are the best parts to fish. Cast up-stream, straight in front of you, with as much line out as you can comfortably command, slowly raising your rod top. Otherwise don't interfere with it, and allow the water to bring the worm down in a natural way.

When to Strike.

The stopping of the line will soon show when the worm is seized; then strike down-stream fairly quickly and firmly, not allowing him time to gorge, and you will often find—using a single hook—your worm little the worse, three or four inches up the gut.

At all times you should fish straight up in front of you, not casting sideways. If you cast the latter way the worm does not come down naturally, even in shallow water. I have tried it in various forms,

and find the sure way to success is to fish straight up in front of you. You may certainly get an occasional fish by casting off "the straight," but I have always found that in fishing to the side of me the trout follow the worm down-stream ever so far without attempting to take it, being suspicious that something is attached to the bait. The buoyancy of the gut, even in a foot of water, when cast two or three yards off "the straight," causes the worm to come down sideways, and the trout quickly detect that it is not natural. When rivers attain their lowest summer level everything is in favour of the trout, and unless you fish correctly, creels will be practically "full of emptiness." So I here repeat again, fish straight up in front of you.

The Cast.

The gut cast should be seven or eight feet long with a few strands of fine drawn

gut on the lower portion next to the hook, and tapering with undrawn towards the reel line. Of course, the nature of the weather will cause the fisher to vary the length of cast. If a breeze is blowing down stream the cast must be shortened, and such fine gut is not necessary, as on calm days when the water has a surface like glass.

The length of line required should not be less than fifteen feet, and in casting, the line should be brought back with an easy swing, bringing the rod top round more in a circle than in fly-fishing. In the forward cast bring the line straight over the shoulder, allowing the rod to do the work. It is advisable to proceed as near as possible up the centre of the stream, as in this way one comes to closer quarters with the fish without being perceived. If you are fortunate to have the surface of the water ruffled a much shorter line may be used.

In June and July trout will be found to be in the pink of condition, consequently they are capable of feeding in strong water. Therefore, the angler must bear this in mind, and cast over every yard of likely water.

Trout will also take the worm in the latter part of April and May, when they are feeding on the creeper, so it is as well to have a supply of both.

Best Time for "Worming."

The most suitable time for worming is when the rivers are at their lowest level with settled weather. They take well on hot days with a bright sunshine from a cloudless sky, and if a gentle breeze is on the water so much the better, as this permits the angler to fish the thin water on the gravel-bed side of pools, also the thin flat water just immediately above the head of streams. These are excellent places to cast over, and they seldom prove dis-

appointing. Of course they can only be fished when there is sufficient wind to cause a nice curl.

I have also had splendid sport on dull sultry days with a gentle rain falling and the sky quite overcast with heavy clouds. Trout also take with avidity for a few hours immediately before a flood. In fishing broken water it is quite an easy matter for an angler to take a trout from a good run, but it requires careful and scientific work to creel half-a-dozen in a short stream of say five or six yards. To do this the angler must approach the stream carefully, and on hooking the first fish and each subsequent one, bring them down stream immediately they are hooked, playing them in the water already disturbed. If a trout darts up-stream it gives warning to the others in the vicinity, and the merest suspicion is sufficient to alarm those above.

On a calm day only the streams are fishable, *and the angler should approach the*

water side fully twenty yards below where the ripple is first apparent. If you do not pay particular attention to this, and walk along the river side close to the stream you are almost certain to disturb one or two trout, who will dart up stream giving fatal alarm to those above.

In striking a stream thus, the fisher should pay attention to the thin water on the gravel-bed side of the stream, then with consecutive casts fish carefully up, casting the worm about a yard higher up with each cast. If there are any large stones or other shelter in the streams, or where the channel merges into deeper water, great attention must be paid to these, as they are ideal haunts and seldom prove unproductive.

Little time should be wasted when fishing small rivers; but with rivers like the Eden, Coquet, or the Tyne, it is different. In any of these rivers, or others of a similar volume, a good stretch of water

takes up much time to exhaust, and should be fished twice over, by the angler wading farther into the water on the second attempt. All water, no matter how shallow, if there is sufficient current to cause the slightest ripple, should not be missed at this period; trout move about, and this type of water frequently hold fish, but in fishing this description of water it is necessary for the angler to use a much longer line, and to keep out of sight. Once the water has been disturbed it is labour in vain to fish it again before a couple of hours or so have elapsed.

Flooded Waters.

So far these remarks apply solely to clear water fishing, and clear water fishers have little patience to fish in spated waters. I am not in favour of this phase of the sport, and consequently refrain from saying anything on bait-fishing in muddy waters. However, floods are very useful to cleanse

the bed of the rivers, which frequently become very foul, especially during hot, dry weather in mid-summer. It also sometimes stirs up good fish to feed more greedily.

For a day's clear water fishing about a gross of worms are required. Murton's supply a useful japanned tin-box to strap round the waist, with a partition to carry creepers as well.

The Time of Year.

Worm-fishing is practicable the whole season, but it is only during June and July that I advocate its use, as during these months it forms the principal food, and I strongly urge its practice immediately the stone-fly fishing is over. When June is fairly established, such quarters as Longtown on the Border Esk, the lower reaches of the Eden, or the lower reaches of almost any north-country river, flowing through rich soil, are recommended.

Usually in these places the fishing is early, and lasts for a very much shorter time than in smaller streams. In small streams like the Redewater, Till, Irthing, Upper Tees, or North Tyne, the take continues much longer and more certain, and are splendidly adapted for clear-water worming. Throughout June and July in rivers of this size trout feed almost all the day, and towards evening they fall to the tail end of pools; but in the early morning, say from 2.30 A.M. to 8 A.M., they are more or less in the streams.

Of course the methods advised here will be equally successful wherever trout fishing is obtainable, whether in the South, the Midlands, or elsewhere. Especially good rivers are the Teme (Ludlow), the Wye and Derwent (Derbyshire), and the Taw (North Devon). The Yorkshire rivers, Yore, Swale, and Wharfe, should also be mentioned. Most anglers, however, travel North or West for trouting.

CHAPTER VI.

MINNOW FISHING.

Minnow fishing is practicable the whole of the season, and in rivers where this lure is permissible it will be found the most exciting of all modes of fishing. It appeals to the appetites of the largest trout; and while these fish are pursuing a minnow they do so with remarkable dash, chasing it until they think it is likely to escape, and frequently seizing it on the verge of the water-side. Generally speaking, at the close of a successful day's minnowing, you will find you have a basket of even-sized fish.

The Rod for "Minnowing."

To begin with, your rod should not be less than twelve feet and fairly stiffly built. One of the best times to fish the minnow is just after a flood, and if the rod is at all

supple you have little command of your bait in the strong water. The point of your rod in spinning should always be kept below the elbow, and a good wrinkle is to keep your rod top below the surface when fishing in a strong water.

The natural minnow, which is unquestionably the best lure, has many different kinds of tackle to fish same. I strongly recommend, however, a tackle after the style of the Archer spinner, which spins well; but I have personally somewhat altered the hooks to increase its hooking powers, as the two main objects in spinning are to get the bait to spin well, and at the same time have the hooks so arranged that a fish can scarcely seize the bait without being hooked. To make certain of a good spin on the bait have two swivels on your trace. These remarks apply to fishing in heavy waters. Cummins (Bishop Auckland) sells a good quill minnow, which kills well in clear water.

SPINNING NATURAL MINNOW.

(See page 69).

In Heavy Waters.

Choose a nice stream with the water flowing about five miles an hour; throw the minnow across stream, drawing it down and across in short jerks; turn the rod top and bring the minnow up stream in a similar way. You will often find that the trout takes it at the turn, so do not strike too quickly or too severely, as fish are often lost in this way. See to spin over every yard of water in a good stream, as trout may be lurking in any portion of it. A lead will be required in heavy waters.

In Clear Water.

Another way in clear water is to fish the rough streams where nothing but conditioned fish will be found. Use as much line as the length of your rod, take the bait in your left hand, bend your rod top towards you and cast with your right hand up and across stream, drawing it down and

across stream in sharp jerks. Trout will be found behind big stones. Also fish it down a long rough stream, letting your line out yard by yard until you get a long length of line out.

You often have good sport in this manner in clear water, when all other kinds of fishing are off.

The Drop Minnow.

Drop minnow fishing is another form of angling which is very deadly and can be practised in awkward corners, in deep water or where it is overhung with trees which it would be an impossibility to spin over. There are different ways of baiting in this mode of procedure. Personally I use a single hook leaded round the shank, and tied to a length of gut which is looped. The way to bait is to hold the minnow in the left hand between thumb and fore-finger, take the baiting needle passed through the loop of gut in the right hand

and push through the minnow's mouth, coming out at the tail, draw the tackle through the hook which is left out at the mouth and attach your trace by a hook-swivel.

Use a short line to commence with, not more than a couple of yards, slipping the minnow gently into the water—taking care to keep out of sight—and work it up and down, gradually getting down into the deeper water, and should a trout be about he is certain to seize. When you feel him give him time to turn the minnow in his mouth and gorge it, then strike pretty firmly, and you are almost sure to secure a good fish. See Chapter on Tackle (page 97).

The Small, Bright Minnow.

Small, bright minnows may also be used in clear water and fished the same way as clear-water worm cast up stream, using a long length of line and fishing

the thin, sluggish water by the side of pools. This requires somewhat skilful manipulation in casting, and when once the minnow alights in the water it must not be further interfered with. I only advise this method during the height of summer in the clearest waters.

Spinning with a Patent Casting-Reel.

Spinning with a patent casting-reel has many advantages, and is now largely in vogue. It offers good facilities to the novice, inasmuch as he can learn to cast with an hour's practice. He can also get out a much longer line than with any other reel, using the lightest of baits. There is no fear of becoming foul with any obstacles in casting, as only five or six feet of line are necessary from the rod top to make the cast, and the reel cannot over-run. Of course, it is necessary to use a fine silk spinning line, No. 1

or No. 2, and in hot weather it is advisable to occasionally rub the line with mutton fat so as to prevent it kinking.

A special rod is requisite for casting with a patent spinning-reel, and a useful length is about ten feet, made of greenheart and with special porcelain rings, which have less friction on the fine lines. This style of spinning is practised both up and down stream, the great advantage to the angler being the long length of line so easily cast out when fishing is "fine and far off."

When to Fish Minnow.

Trout take the minnow best in the early morning, and again towards evening. Small or medium minnows are preferable in clear waters, and the larger in heavy waters. In waters clearing from a flood an artificial silver or golden devon often answers fairly well. In fact, I advise the use of artificial baits in heavy coloured

waters only, as under these conditions trout have to be in close quarters to observe them.

To Obtain Minnows.

To collect minnows in flooded waters, use a small mesh landing-net close to the side, searching the easy or gentle-running water. Then preserve them in a mild solution of formalin. Another way of obtaining minnows in clear water is to wade in the water by the side of weirings or willows growing in the water, or any such refuge. Place your landing-net by the side in such a position that when you stamp your foot amongst the roughness they will dart into the net, which should be raised almost instantly. This is a very good way of getting minnows in a low water, and a very profitable and enjoyable way of spending an hour or two at the side while fishing is at a discount, and you have the satis-

faction of knowing you have procured your own bait. At the same time, it is always advisable to have a stock of minnows by you.

The minnow is, moreover, a very handsome little fish. Take one in your hand and examine him closely, and you will admire him. Take particular notice of his shape. He is just like a miniature spring salmon. Mark his beautiful colouring—every shade of olive, white, pale brown, silver, pink, and rose harmoniously blended and producing a most beautiful mottled appearance. The best baits to select are the fat, clear-coloured, from 1½ to 2 inches long.

The Loach.

The loach, loche, stone-loach, or groundling is absolutely one of the most deadly lures for trout. It is better known by many country anglers as "Tommy the Lodger." It delights in clear-running

rivulets, which it prefers to broad rivers; during the daytime it keeps chiefly in the shallow streams concealed under stones, and can easily be taken with a landing-net in the strong, thin water, the same way as collecting creeper mentioned in a previous chapter. The loach feeds on the larvæ of aquatic insects and such small worms as it can meet, and will not infrequently bite at a baited hook. During the latter part of May, June, and July it proves a most deadly lure; fished in a similar way to the minnow, it nearly always accounts for a good fish.

What to Imitate.

In minnowing in large rivers or heavy waters, the secret of success is to try and imitate an injured or frightened minnow; therefore it is unnecessary to spin continually, and a likely time for hooking a fish is at the end of a spin or jerk, when the minnow is almost stopping from re-

volving. It is bad form to draw the minnow up stream against the strong current, but try to imitate a minnow struggling against the stream and endeavouring for shelter.

If the waters are very low and clear it will be advisable to cast up stream and spin down and across, and weight the bait according to the volume of water. This is best accomplished, if using an Archer spinner, by having a pear-shaped lead on the pin and inserted down the minnow's mouth. Should this not prove heavy enough, twist a piece of lead wire round the trace about two feet from the spinner, or a few split shot will answer the same purpose.

CHAPTER VII.

NIGHT FISHING.

THERE are many rivers where night fishing during the months of June, July, and August is well practised by anglers, whereas during the day-time they are almost deserted. During mid-summer fly-fishing through the day is almost at a standstill. Even with a nice ripple on the water, trout cannot be induced to rise; but they take fly well at night.

On the Eden, for example, the number of rods I have seen nightly on this river goes a long way to prove the success they are attaining. At the same time a couple of hours—say, from ten o'clock until midnight—passed on the banks of the river is very pleasant and enjoyable, more particularly when the sun has full power

through the day. For night fishing two flies are quite sufficient to use, and although it is fairly dark care must be taken not to make yourself conspicuous. Take the shelter of a dark hillside or an embankment, as even in a fading light a shadow is quickly reflected on the water, and trout, being the keenest-eyed of fishes, are easily alarmed. Moreover, at night-time trout leave the streams and pools and fall down to the thin, flat, shallow water, and frequently feed close to the sides. Thus, they are easily frightened away. Unlike the correct way of up-stream fly-fishing, night fishing is usually practised down stream, the fly dragging on the water. Cast across stream slightly below you, and follow round with the rod top about the same pace as the water is flowing keeping the line taut. In approaching a good swim, do not neglect to search the water near to you before wading.

How Trout Rise at Night.

Trout generally take the fly very quickly after sunset—at the same time meaning to have it—and the rise of a fish is seldom seen until he is hooked. Frequently they will jump once or twice out of the water before settling down to fight. Trout should be thoroughly played out before attempting to land when night-fishing, and it is safer to land on the side of the river than in a landing-net, as they always seem to reserve a last effort, and it is annoying to find your dropper-fly fast in your landing-net or waders and the fish gone.

One evening two seasons ago I was fishing, and had succeeded in hooking a noble two-pounder—which, by the way, I put the fly over half a score of times. Fully ten minutes did I devote to this fish, he feeding all the while. When I tried to land him in my net he made a final dash away, and I found, to my regret, the

dropper-fly caught in the net, which taught me a lesson to dispense with the net for night-fishing, especially on the gravel-bed side of the river. On light nights with a clear sky small flies are preferable, but larger flies should be brought into use if the sky becomes rather overcast.

Bustard or Moth Fishing.

This form of night fishing often furnishes splendid sport, and the most likely water to fish is the slow running stream where the water is not flowing more than two miles an hour and is over-hung with willows. Cast by the side and underneath the willows, as this is very natural for flies dropping from them on to the water.

One bustard is quite sufficient to fish with, and a light-coloured or pale-yellow bustard answers well. You must exercise care in wading to avoid any ripples, as in day-time, for these are fatal. If you cannot wade in without causing ripples, you

should wait patiently for a few minutes when you have reached the desired spot before casting. It is quite unnecessary to move about at night, as trout do that.

The shallow ends of pools, and just above stream-heads, are the choicest parts for trout feeding, and a small stretch is all that is required for an evening's fishing.

Maggot is another successful lure fished with the fly, and has accounted for many "lordly" trout, and those who follow evening fishing seldom appear at the waterside without them.

The Flies for Night Use.

Towards sunset during warm weather, and all through the darkness, trout invariably rise freely to the fly. As long as the twilight lingers use small sets of flies, and when darkness first sets in the rise will go off for a little while, and it is then advisable to change to a larger set similar to flies used for loch fishing. The Green

and Grey Drakes also answer admirably. Of course much stronger gut may be employed in the darkness, and the angler is not required to throw such a long line. I advocate the use of two flies to avoid the chances of ravelling.

Heavy Trout at Night.

The heaviest trout are often captured in night fishing, and when you have the luck to hook a good one, instantly raise the point of your rod and keep it up, and ever up. Never let out more line than you can possibly help, and to this end follow your fish up, down, or across stream, keeping as close to him as you can. If you simply stand still and let him run, it is ten to one you lose him. In playing a big fish always try to keep a large portion of the gut clear of the water.

Good trout often feed close into the banks and the shallow sides of pools; therefore, these quarters should be care-

fully cast over and all rises to the natural fly must be responded to, no matter how insignificant they seem, as large trout suck the fly gently down, and do not usually cause the large ripples that smaller ones do. Therefore, all rises should receive attention.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW HINTS ON TACKLE.

GUT.

THE utmost care should be taken in selecting good and new season's gut.

For clear water fine natural gut is undoubtedly most suitable, but owing to the difficulty of procuring same, drawn gut x, xx, xxx, xxxx is now largely used. Should the angler make up his own casts, it is as well to have the different hanks 1x to 4x, with a hank of "medium strong." He can thus vary his cast to suit any waters during the season.

Gut plays a very important part in the angler's equipment, and none but the best quality should be employed. Various dyes are used to stain gut. I use an infusion of

strong tea, and steep the gut in it for half-an-hour, which does away with much of the glitter and gives the gut a neutral tint.

The gut should be kept in chamois skin. Murton (Newcastle) has a new patent pig-skin pouch, containing transparent celluloid envelopes, that answers admirably. Any close material preserves gut, but it should be exposed to light as little as possible.

Making Up a Cast.

In making up casts it needs to be well soaked in warm water, otherwise it is brittle. Lay the ends of two strands side

Fisherman's Knot.

by side, then—the gut being first thoroughly well soaked—form a loop with each of the short ends of the gut, and pass the end through twice, making two half-hitches

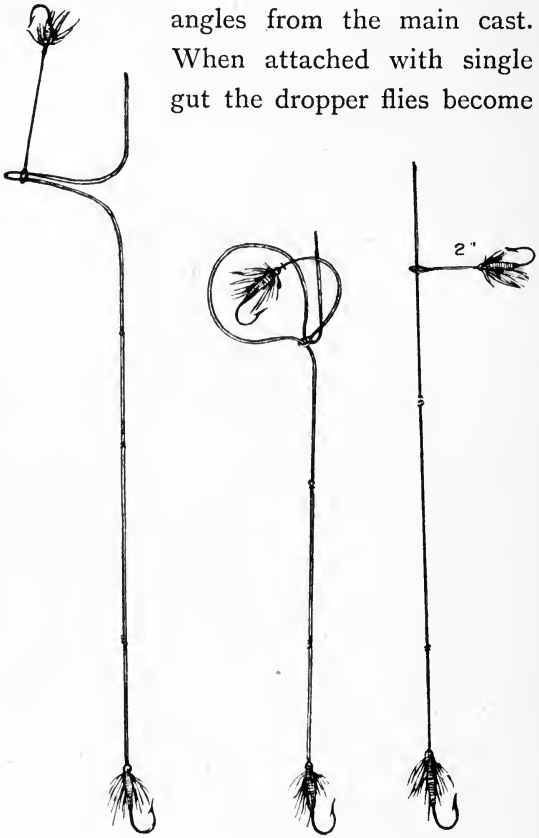
round the line. Now draw them tight and pull together. This is the well-known "Fisherman's Knot," frequently used in attaching dropper flies. If the half-hitches are used single the waste ends should not be cut too close.

To Attach Dropper Flies.

A good way to attach dropper flies to the cast is to make a small loop, not larger than a quarter of an inch, and not further

than two inches from the fly; then take the main cast and double it above a knot where you desire to attach the dropper. Insert the main cast, thus doubled, through the small loop of the dropper, then pass the dropper fly through the loop thus formed on the main cast; straighten the main cast, and draw the dropper tight above the knot.

Thus the dropper is looped with double gut, and will, therefore, stand out at right angles from the main cast. When attached with single gut the dropper flies become



twisted round the cast and are rendered almost useless.

To Attach Eyed Hooks.

The "Jamb Knot" is one of the simplest and most perfect ways of securing eyed-hooks. These can be fastened, complete, in a few seconds, owing to the hook-eye being only of sufficient size to allow the

gut to pass through, making a small and neat knot. Take the fly by the bend, between the forefinger and thumb of the left hand, with the eye turned upwards; pass two or three inches of gut through the eye towards the point of the hook, then double back the gut and make a single slip-knot. Draw the sliding knot sufficiently tight, so as just to allow of its

passing over the hook-eye, then run it down to and over the edge, pulling gradually until it becomes tight; thus

forming a neat and strong fastening, and one of the greatest boons to dry fly-fishers.

Attaching the Reel Line to Gut Cast.

The end of the reel line is passed through the gut loop, round it, then down through the loop again, forming a figure 8; then

drawn perfectly taut. This method has the advantage of forming a compact little knot, and at the same time it is quite easily loosened, even in darkness.

1.—Creeper tackle tied with an eyed hook.

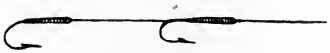
Creeper Baited.

2.—Creeper tackle on gut with different sized hooks.

3.—Creeper stone-fly, or grub tackle, impaling the larger hook sideways through the body.

Worm Baited.

4.—Single hook with needle-point used for worming.

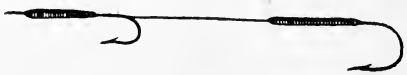


5.—Pennel tackle for clear-water worm.

6.—Stewart tackle for clear-water worming.

7.—Creeper or clear-water worm tackle, with the gut extended beyond the hook to allow for a small shot sinker, and thus giving a direct pull. This tackle works well when fish are taking gingerly.

All these hooks should be bronzed and rust-proof.



Fishing with minnows in medium-sized waters. A long-shanked single hook with a small lip-hook. The size of large hooks to correspond with size of minnows.

The big hook should measure in length equal to the distance from nose to the vent of the minnow. The above tackle may also be used in spated waters, with the addition of a flying triangle behind tail.

Another useful tackle for clear water fishing is composed of two double hooks

and a lip hook, arranged so as to give the necessary curve to the tail.

Natural Minnow Spinning Tackles.

This is a modification of hooks arranged on the Archer spinner to my own pattern,

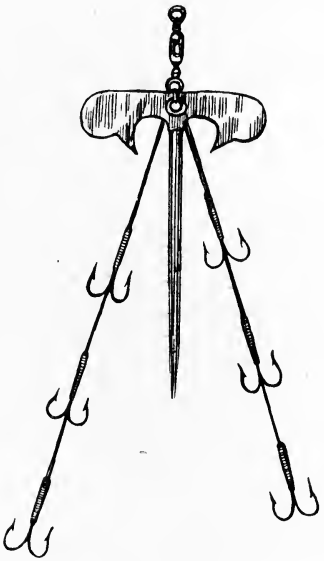


Fig. 1.

and I strongly recommend its use as one of the best tackles of to-day. It gives a

brilliant spin to the bait, with unrivalled hooking powers. A triangle may be added when fishing in heavy or coloured waters, as shown in diagram, Fig. 1 *a*. This tackle

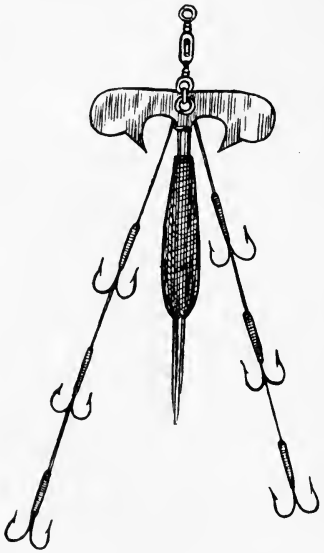
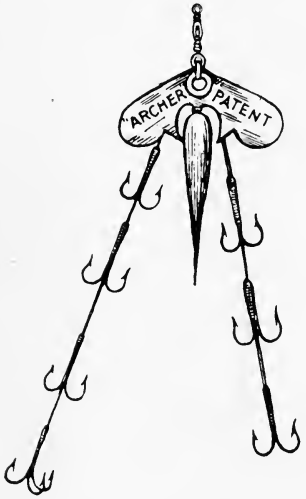


FIG. 1*a*.

may also be adapted in low waters by making up with fine hooks; and in clear water it will be unnecessary to have any lead on the centre-pin.

This is simply a pin with propellers, and the flights arranged in a similar way to Fig. 1. It has a most natural appear-



ARCHER SPINNER.

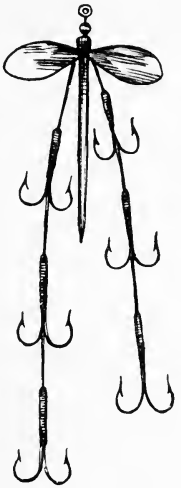


FIG. 2.

ance when spinning, and proves very effective.

Fig. 3 shows the minnow baited with the previous tackles, indicating the position of the hooks. Thus it will be seen that it is

almost impossible to be seized by a trout without being hooked, yet nevertheless I

FIG. 3.

have experienced this occurrence, the two flights being split apart and the minnow gone.

NATURAL MINNOW FISHING.

There are numerous tackles for spinning for trout with natural minnow, which is doubtless a very artistic and exciting form of sport. I have been a disciple for some years now and experimented with different kinds of tackle, and consequently have every confidence in recommending the aforementioned spinners in the order of merit named.

Drop Minnow Tackle, referred to in Chapter on Minnow Fishing.

Another good tackle is composed of two treble-hooks and one small single hook with a small round tapered lead attached.

To bait, insert the lead well down the minnow's mouth, turn the tackle round, fixing the hooks in the side and the single hook through the tail.

A single treble is also a good tackle and baited the same way as the single hook, and a loop of the gut hitched round the thin part of the minnow's tail.

The Landing Net.

A landing net is very essential for most rivers, and is, I think, now almost universally used. There are dozens of designs on the market, but I prefer one with a good-sized rim and knuckle joints, so that when not in use it can be easily carried by slipping the handle down the inside of the creel strap or belt round the waist, thus allowing free use of both hands to wet or dry fly-fishers alike.

Furthermore, it is a convenient position to carry the landing-net when negotiating awkward fences, and especially so if you are troubled by barbed-wire. The net should have a small mesh with a good depth, and can thus be used for collecting creepers and minnows.

A Rod for Fly-Fishing.

In small wooded streams a ten feet rod is of ample length, but on fairly open rivers, which have acquired a good volume, a

somewhat larger weapon is desirable. But in no case whatever should the length exceed twelve feet, and I only recommend this latter length for a vigorous man, where long casting is absolutely necessary.

The rod should balance well, having a nice action (not too supple), and should be capable of throwing a good long line without effort.

Care of Rod.

Rods when put together or unmounted in their covers ought never to be placed against a wall, as they are likely to warp.

The rod cover should be kept dry, therefore it is better to carry it about as little as possible. A little vaseline occasionally rubbed on the joints of the rod, often save valuable time and trouble. Well-waxed thread, or quarter-inch broad linen tape, should always be included in the angler's equipment; breakages may occur miles from any place of repair.

The Reel.

Reels have now obtained a high standard of excellence, and being of fine mechanism, are easily put out of order. Therefore, great care should be taken to guard against knocks or falls of any kind, or coming in contact with sand.

After being in use on a wet day the reel should be dismounted and thoroughly cleaned, and then rubbed gently over with a selvet and a little pure olive oil. After a day's fishing the reel line should be unwound and the wet portion dried, otherwise they soon rot.

If using a fine silk line for spinning, it is most essential that the line be dried immediately each day after use. There are many line-driers on the market that prove a good investment. When the line is wound off the reel on to the winder, they may both be put away until wanted.

Waders.

For ordinary trout-fishing stockings do very well. In purchasing waders always get a good quality; they will last twice as long as cheap materials, and give every comfort. Immediately after use, they should be turned inside out to allow all dampness to escape, and are then to be returned. Do not dry them near a fire, but in the open air, or a warm, airy room.

Wading Boots or Fishing Brogues.

The most durable brogues are leather soles, hand-sewn throughout, with riveted nails and canvas uppers; they should be made to lace up, in preference to straps and buckles. Boots protect the waders better than shoes, inasmuch as they keep out the sand and small stones, thus preventing chafing.

Hand-knitted Shetland wool socks of a heather-coloured mixture wear well.

CHAPTER IX.

LOCH OR LAKE FISHING.

Loch fishing, as compared with river fishing, does not require the same amount of skill to creel a fair basket; nevertheless, it is a most enjoyable pastime, and appeals to the angler on account of the superior size and quality of the trout caught. Our old angling friends used to tell us that fly-fishing was of little avail unless there was sufficient breeze to cause a nice ripple on the water, but now our ideas on the subject are altogether different.

With the use of the finest gut and improved tackle generally there are few occasions when trout may not be taken with fly on our lakes. Again, lake fishing is now becoming very popular throughout

the United Kingdom, and perhaps largely on account of the over-crowding of anglers on our rivers.

The Equipment for the Lake.

The best rod, in my opinion, for fishing from a boat is one of eleven feet in length, light, moderately stiff, and one that can be fished with either hand. If the angler intends fishing from the shore, a little longer weapon is better, and I recommend one of twelve to fourteen feet long, as the angler requires to cast farther than is necessary when using a boat. A first-class cane-built, or one entirely of green-heart, is the best description of rod. It is also most essential for the angler to choose a rod that is not in the slightest degree too heavy for continuously casting throughout the day.

The best line is a waterproof silk for choice, of a greenish colour and about 50 yards in length, with a tapered tippet of

twisted gut or horse hair about $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards long, spliced to the line so that it may not catch on the rings of the rod while being reeled in.

The winch is a very important part of the outfit for loch fishing, and in addition to balancing, the rod should be one of the quick-winding or multiplying reels now on the market, with an easy-going regulating check, and just sufficiently strong to prevent the line over-running. The ratchets on many winches are much too stiff for still-water fishing, and consequently heavy fish when hooked on fine tackle are almost a hopeless task. There are doubtless more fish and tackle lost in this respect through a too stiffly running reel than any other cause that lake anglers have to contend against.

Conditions to be Considered.

Many anglers do not sufficiently study the various aspects of the subject and

system of loch-fishing compared with the river-fisher, who has learned the cunning ways of approaching his quarry. On the contrary, they think it is quite easy to go to any loch that has been little fished and secure a basket of fish. Such, however, is not the case, and large trout are not easily captured unless scientific methods are employed. For instance, they use the same flies day after day, fishing exactly in the same way, in all sorts of lochs, in all states of water, wind, and weather, times of the day, and at any period of the angling season. Consequently they only succeed on favourable days.

To attain success, study and make careful observation of the different ways the fly should be worked in varying circumstances. If there is a light breeze trout generally rise well to the fly if drawn direct and slow against the ripple, just sufficiently fast to keep the flies on the surface. If the waves are large, the flies

should be drawn sideways between them, or should there be a swell on it is best to sink the flies slightly below the surface and work them sideways.

When to "Strike."

As a general rule in loch-fishing, trout must not be struck too quickly; wait until the pull is "felt" before striking. There are, however, exceptions to every rule, and on a calm day, when the surface of the water is like a sheet of glass and fish are rising shyly, I believe in striking immediately the surface of the water is broken. In loch-fishing, as opposed to river-fishing, trout frequently rise to the fly as you make the first movement in lifting the flies for the backward cast. This has often occurred to the writer in using a double-handed rod and fishing from the sides, wading in. In this case, should the angler have his finger on the line, the result is disastrous, ending in lifting

the fish a foot or two on the water and the hook tearing away.

There are great differences of opinion as to how and when to "strike." This I think greatly depends on how the fish are rising and on the state of the water. However, I strongly advise the angler not to be too quick in striking. Large loch trout are nearly always slow takers, thus it is very difficult to determine the correct instant to strike when fish are rising shyly.

When to Use Fine Tackle.

On calm days, with bright sunshine from a cloudless sky, much depends on your tackle, and of course under these circumstances, when angling is at a discount, the finer the tackle the greater your chances of sport.

Again, half the battle in loch-fishing is knowing the feeding-ground on which fish lie, therefore it behoves the angler to

observe and keep a constant look out for any fish moving. If a fairly stiff breeze is blowing, causing small waves, the gleam of trout is more easily detected near the surface of the water than the actual rise to the fly itself.

If this is not known, the boat should be rowed very slowly and quietly against the wind (if the surface is tolerably smooth great care should be exercised to cause as little ripple as possible with the oars), the angler searching with a medium length of line at right angles from the stern of the boat. Should he get a rise, or observe fish feeding, let the boatman row fifty or sixty yards beyond and turn the boat and drift over the place where they were observed moving. Should he be successful, then continue short drifts in the vicinity until the rise comes to an end. In open water it is easy to follow a good fish and "play" him from the boat, but should there be weed-beds, great care must

be taken to coax the fish out into the open. It is also desirable in stormy weather to coax the fish to the windward, otherwise the boat is almost certain to drift over the line and foul the flies.

Loch Trout in Shoals.

In many of our lochs trout travel in shoals, so it is thus a wise policy to exhaust the immediate neighbourhood of rising fish in preference to moving about for better sport: a practice too frequently followed by beginners, which often ends with the result of missing "the take" when it is on.

In fishing a loch when sport proves "dead off," the ordinary method of drifting must not be too strictly adhered to, and the angler should leave no method untried. Trolling with fly sometimes works fairly well, but in this method it is advisable to use a larger-sized fly and a little stouter gut to meet the extra strain.

The boat should be rowed slowly and quietly along the windward side of the loch in about seven to eight feet of water, letting out about forty yards of line from the stern of the boat.

For blow-line fishing or dapping with natural flies, the most suitable length of rod is about fifteen feet, light, yet fairly stiff.

The reel must have an easy ratchet and run smoothly, the drum being well filled with backing with about seventy-five yards of fine gossamer silk spliced on, and a trace of fine gut three yards long, together with a thin wire hook.

Preference for Natural Flies.

The natural flies are sweetest and best when freshly gathered, and whenever possible it will repay the angler to have them collected in the early morning for the day's fishing. This can easily be done

by employing local boys, who seem quite satisfied with a shilling or two, and they are always on the alert when anglers are about, especially in the May fly and stone-fly season.

"May flies," the "Drakes" of Ireland, "stone-flies," "daddy-long-legs," and "blue-bottles" work wonders by means of the blow-line proving most deadly. Being of a very delicate nature, however, they need to be carefully and judiciously handled. The yellow drake and the grey drake seem particularly attractive, and beyond doubt account for some heavy baskets of fish.

While these flies are on the hatch it is simply a waste of time trying any other lure. Other insects may be gathered in the shallow water of lochs or out of any small rivulets flowing into the same, and are to be manipulated in a similar way. The natural flies that abound in the loch may be used successfully throughout the season.

To Use the Natural Fly.

Assuming the angler is in all readiness and the boat in a favourite "drift," impale a brace of "drakes" on the hook, and thus with about five or six yards of line out hold the rod in an upright position, and with the wind at your back it will drift the line straight out. Then, when fully extended, lower your rod top and the flies will alight on the surface of the water just like the oft-quoted thistle-down. When a rise is observed, or the flies are sucked down, the merest tightening of the line is sufficient to send the hook home. It must, therefore, always be borne in mind that when using delicate tackle it is quite unnecessary to strike.

When a fish is hooked, he will rush, then probably plunge out of the water. If this be so, the rod top must be instantly lowered until he regains his own element. Every care must be taken in playing a loch trout,

as they die hard, and as a general rule prove splendid specimens of the scaly tribe.

The Natural Minnow.

Another tempting lure is that of trolling and spinning a natural minnow. This is best accomplished by employing a fine undressed No. 1 or No. 2 silk line, and I have frequently had good results in this mode of fishing on bright calm days, with a clear Italian sky and a surface on the water like glass.

A similar rod used for blow-line fishing answers. The reel requires to be a large-sized one, well filled with line and capable of quick winding, with sufficient space left to splice on about 150 yards of the fine lines No. 1 or No. 2. The spinning tackle described in the chapter on minnow fishing answers well.

Row briskly but quietly along the loch, letting out the line until the whole of the

silk line is out, and the bait is spinning quite clear of all the wakes caused by the oars, then the boat should be rowed zig-zag. When a fish is hooked it will probably jump two or three times out of the water before settling down to fight. Then the real sport commences, and I make bold to say that the angler will have a lively, exciting time, and will imagine the fish is gone at least a dozen times during the process of winding him in.

The trace should be about four feet long, with two or three swivels to ensure a good spin on the bait.

Large trout invariably become solely bottom feeders, and in spinning with such tempting meaty morsels five and six pounders frequently prove victims.

In rough water or with a boisterous wind blowing, a short line of about forty yards is quite sufficient for trolling.

If trolling in a good depth of water the spinner requires to be well down, thus a

with black or water-rat body; Bustard and yellow body; Orange Governor, Dark Partridge and orange; the Cinnamon, blue, olive, and jay; the Butcher and Alexandra.

I may also add that small river flies, tied about three feet apart on fine gut, have been used to advantage on unfavourable days with smooth water.

The size of flies to be used must be ruled according to state of water and weather, but I do not advocate too large a size, especially in reservoirs.

For Dull Weather.

In dull weather, or when trout are rising freely on the surface, flies imitating the natural insect are the most reliable, while during bright weather showy or silver bodied flies may be used to advantage. If the day is calm or only a slight ripple on the water, cast frequently; but, on the other

hand, if a good breeze is blowing, the flies should be allowed to drift more.

Fishing from the Shore.

When angling from the shore ideal quarters for trout are beneath trees, near beds of reeds or weeds, or large boulders, etc., and the various lures employed may be fished close into the shore. If spinning a natural minnow, trout frequently chase it from the deeper water and do not attempt to seize the bait until it is close into the shore, when they make a dash and seize the lure almost at your feet.

Angling from the shore with worm is another branch in loch fishing, but I am not personally in favour of this phase of the sport. However, on bright or stormy days, it sometimes accounts for a brace or two of fish, so I only recommend worm fishing as a last resource.

The angler is required to cast a long line

with worm on a single hook; a desirable spot is where the worm can sink in the water as it deepens quickly. Then draw the line slowly, in little short jerks, to the shore. Should a fish nibble allow the line to remain until you feel him again, before striking.

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